

SUNDAY

# KENOSHA NEWS

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# Abortion numbers increase locally

## Economic uncertainty has part in rise of procedure

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Abortions are on the rise in Kenosha County, with all of the increase coming from teenagers who chose to end their pregnancies, according to the latest data from the Wisconsin

Department of Health Services.

In 2010, 205 abortions were reported in the county, up from 198 in 2009, the rise among teens 15 to 19 years of age.

Last year, the number of

abortions among the teen group grew from 33 in 2009 to 41 in 2010. The spike in the voluntary termination of pregnancies comes after teen abortions had been at their lowest levels in the last four years. By comparison, in 2005, the number of reported abortions was as high as 55 among teens.

In 2008, 142 abortions were reported in the county, the lowest in 20 years, according

to the state data. In 2009, that number grew by 56, or 39 percent. The number of reported teen abortions decreased by two from 35 in 2008 to 33 in 2009.

Gary Brown, executive director of Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services Inc. said the increase in abortions is troubling given the steady decrease that had been occurring in the earlier part of the decade. In addition the abortion rate increased here from 5.8 to 6 per 1,000 females, a

more than 3 percent increase, while the state's overall rate decreased by 8 percent from 7.4 to 6.8 percent over the year.

### Alarming trend

Brown said increases in abortions and the abortion rate coincide with the economy's turn for the worse three years ago.

"It is alarming and it's another symptom on how hard this economy is and has been on families. Right now people are struggling with

no income, unemployment, scraping by to survive; it's a hard thing if you've got other children," Brown said. "Since the economy went bad you see more women choosing to have an abortion."

The data also suggests that many of the women having abortions are unmarried.

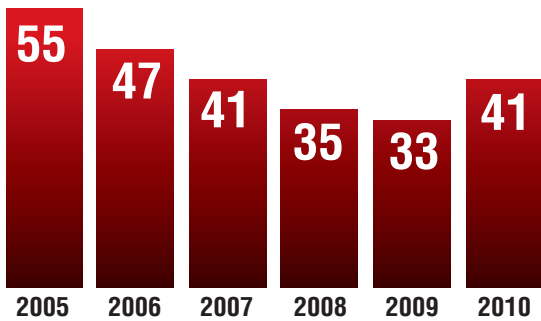
"It's just going to get harder and harder with the economy for lower- or even middle-income women, single

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## Kenosha County Abortion Rates

The abortion rate for Kenosha County increased from 5.8 abortions per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 in 2009 to 6.0 in 2010, a 3% increase. This increase occurred while the overall state abortion rate decreased from 7.4 in 2009 to 6.8 in 2010, an 8% decrease.

The County's teen abortion rate increased from 5.7 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 in 2009 to 7.1 in 2010, a 25% increase.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services

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## ABORTIONS: More teens

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or not married, with a partner or not, as they struggle because they're not sure about their economic future. If they find themselves pregnant, what the data shows is that it looks like abortion is occurring more often," Brown said. "Hopefully more women and more men would be more careful. But it just gets more difficult when they're facing the challenges they're having to face today."

### Connecting with teens

Brown said there are resources in the community, including his agency's teen parent support program which connects with 50 to 60 teens, mostly mothers, each month.

"One of the things we work with them especially

is to not have the second pregnancy," he said.

It is a struggle, however, for any agency or support network, he added.

"There's lots of kids out there living chaotic family lives and when they're surrounded by and are in situations where they don't have positive influences from adults and bad behavior around them, it's pretty hard to reach them and to get them to think about the future, to live a better life because all they see is what is before them," Brown said. "The quality of life for children and families today, looking at these numbers, we don't think it's getting better. So we have to look at it as a community as what can we do more to help children, teens in difficult situations make better choices. It's an ongoing effort."